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ABSTRACT

In 1999, the Intercultural Development Research Association was established to identify 10 promising and/or exemplary bilingual education programs in schools nationwide as determined by participating limited-English-proficient (LEP) students' academic achievement. Researchers requested data on achievement, retention rate, dropout rate, enrollment in gifted and talented/advanced placement (GT/AP) programs, enrollment in special education/remedial programs, test exemption rates, and program exiting standards. Other sources of data included student and school outcome data, school demographic data, teacher and administrator surveys, classroom observations, and focus groups with teachers, parents, and students. Results yielded 25 criteria or indicators of success, including the following: 98 percent or more of all students are not retained in grade; 95 percent or more of all students graduate with a high school diploma; LEP students are not underrepresented in GT/AP programs or overrepresented in special education programs; students participating in bilingual education programs since kindergarten are fully proficient in spoken English and their native language by fifth grade; the school climate is safe and orderly; all parents and community members know the rationale and critical components of bilingual and ESL programs; staff feel accountable for all students' academic success; and high expectations are held for all students. (SM)

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What is Valuable and Contributes to Success in Bilingual Education Programs

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In 1999, the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) was funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA) to identify 10 promising and/or exemplary bilingual education programs in schools across the nation as determined by participating limited-English-proficient (LEP) students' academic achievement. Using these programs, IDRA identified common characteristics and operational criteria that would help researchers and practitioners identify other successful programs or assess the status of local bilingual education programs.

Perspectives or Theoretical Framework

The researchers used a strong theoretical framework that previous research has found to be conducive to successful programs for LEP students and included the following:

Student Outcome Indicators

- Student outcomes for oral and written language proficiency (by LEP and non-LEP percentages) and assessment methods used.
- Student outcomes for content area mastery in English and the native language by LEP and non-LEP percentages that meet or exceed state or district standards.

School Level Indicators

- **Leadership:** Evidence of leadership at the school level, and the characteristics. (Carter and Chatfield, 1986; Lucas et al., 1990)
- **Vision and Goals:** Evidence of the vision and goals at the school level, and the characteristics. (A. Villarreal and A. Solis, 1998)
- **School Climate:** Characteristics of the school's climate.(Lein et al., 1997; Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi, 1986)
- **Linkages:** The existence of linkages between central office and school level staff, and their characteristics. (McLeod, 1996)
- **School Organization and Accountability:** Characteristics of the school's organization. (Villarreal and Solis, 1998; McLeod, 1996)
- **Professional Development:** The demographic characteristics of professional staff, and opportunities for professional development.(Milk et al., 1992; Villarreal, 1999)

- The type, level and quality of parent involvement in the school and the bilingual education program. Parent Involvement (McLeod, 1996; Robledo Montecel et al., 1993)
- The ways staff hold themselves accountable for student success, and how students are assessed. Staff Accountability and Student Assessment (Berman et al., 1995; Valdez-Pierce and O'Malley, 1992)
- How staff are selected and recognized. Staff Selection and Recognition (Maroney, 1998)
- The type, level and quality of community involvement in the school and the bilingual education program. Community Involvement (Moll et al., 1992)

Classroom Level: Programmatic and Instructional Practices

- The characteristics of the bilingual education program model. Program Model (Lucas and Katz, 1994; Villarreal, 1999)
- The characteristics of the classroom climate. Classroom Climate (Goldenberg and Sullivan, 1994)
- The characteristics of the program's curriculum and instruction. Curriculum and Instruction (McLeod, 1996; Wong-Fillmore et al., 1985)
- Teacher expectations regarding student success. Teacher Expectations (Lucas et al.,; Berman et al., 1995)
- The bilingual education program's articulation across grade levels. Program Articulation (McLeod, 1996; Valdez-Pierce and O'Malley, 1992)

Methods Used for this Study

Research Questions

IDRA had one primary research question: *What contributed to the success of a bilingual education classroom as evidenced by LEP student academic achievement?* "Success" was operationally defined as evidence of academic achievement as compared to district and/or state standards for LEP students in bilingual education programs. Prior to site visits, schools submitted for review their most recent achievement data (1997-98) disaggregated by LEP and non-LEP status. Longitudinal data (three years or more), if available, were also provided. Assessment measures, as expected, varied throughout the country.

The researchers requested other quantitative data including retention rate, dropout rate, enrollment in gifted and talented and in advanced placement programs, enrollment in special education or remedial programs, test exemption rates, and the program exiting standard.

In addition to the review of quantitative student and school outcome data, school demographic data, surveys of principals, teachers and administrators, and structured formal classroom observations were other sources of quantitative data. Qualitative data included structured interviews with the school principals and administrators and focus group questions for teachers, parents and students. All of these data were gathered, analyzed and synthesized. Results were then triangulated to provide a rich and accurate picture of each school. Patterns and trends across schools were then identified.

The researchers ensured that programs selected for the study reflected the diversity of U.S. schools and included elementary and secondary schools, different geographic locations, different language groups, LEP concentrations, varying bilingual education models, and Title I targeted assistance and schoolwide programs as well as Title VII grantees (current and former).

Selection of 10 Bilingual Education Programs

IDRA used its extensive national network of contacts (created after three decades of cutting-edge work and advocacy in bilingual education) to identify successful bilingual education programs – based on student and school outcomes. Several state education directors, OBEMLA staff, comprehensive regional assistance center staff, bilingual education directors at the state and local levels, and others provided the names of 20 programs that met the criteria (evidence of LEP students' academic achievement).

In the fall of 1999, a letter was sent to the 20 program directors requesting their participation in this research study and the sharing of student outcome and school data, prior to a possible site visit (the latter being contingent on the review of the data). Responsibilities for the participants (principals, teachers and parents), if selected for a site visit, were also included in the letter. Of the 20 programs, 11 were selected for site visits, based on their availability for a site visit, agreement to participate, and review of the data. One of the programs upon further review, lacked sufficient data (due to the recent start of its program) to be included in the study. The 10 schools with promising or exemplary practices in bilingual education were located in California, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Oregon, Texas, Utah, and Washington, D.C.

Instrumentation and Protocols

IDRA developed and adapted instrumentation and protocols for this research effort. IDRA's extensive empirical research in this area, including our 1997 Audit of the Tucson Unified School District's Bilingual Education and Hispanic Studies Department, provided the study with a resource of instruments already piloted in comparable settings. These were adapted for more appropriate use in this study, ensuring alignment with the aforementioned research questions.

IDRA's instrumentation reflected the use both of quantitative and qualitative methods. In addition to the review of quantitative student outcome and school data, school demographic data, surveys of principals, teachers and administrators, and structured formal classroom observations were other sources of quantitative data. Qualitative data included structured interviews with the school principals and the administrators and focus group questions for teachers, parents and students (whenever possible). Additional qualitative data were elicited from school profiles. A framework was provided for describing each site visit thus providing a context and background for the visit. All of these data were gathered, analyzed and synthesized. Results were then triangulated to provide a rich and accurate picture of each program. Patterns and trends across programs were also identified.

After analyzing and synthesizing the demographic profile data for each school, a copy was sent to the district superintendents, requesting their review and approval of the accuracy of the information. It is important to note that this research study was *not* an evaluation of bilingual education programs, that is, we did not evaluate programs using a set of characteristics and criteria already established. Instead, we developed the criteria by observing and learning from programs that had evidence of achievement for all of its students. These criteria can now be used by practitioners and researchers to assess programs and recognize areas that are strong and others that may need improvement.

It is also important to note that if each of the programs in this study were to conduct a self-assessment by these criteria, there would be no perfect program – one that meets 100 percent of the criteria. They would, however, meet most of the criteria with room for improvement for a few. Perhaps one of the most important lessons these programs teach is the need for constant assessment in a context of school accountability for student success, and/or focus on improvement and celebration of achievements. It is in this spirit that we present the major findings of this study.

Major Findings

School Demographics

The school demographics reflect, by design, a diverse landscape. Eight elementary schools, one high school and one middle school participated in this research study. The student enrollment for the 10 schools ranged from 219 to 1,848 students. By geographic location, there were six urban schools, three rural schools and one reservation school. There was also diversity in ethnic representation: Hispanic students ranged from 40 percent to 98 percent of students enrolled; Asian students made up 2 percent to 41 percent of the schools; Russian students ranged from 12 percent to 32 percent of the schools; and Native Americans comprised 3 percent to 98 percent of the schools.

Five of the 10 schools implemented dual language or two-way bilingual programs. The languages used for content area subjects included Spanish, English, Russian, and Navajo. All of the schools were committed to maintaining the students' primary language and culture while learning English.

This commitment was also evident in the school administration and staff, the majority of whom were proficient in two languages. Most of the office staff were also bilingual, allowing for open communication between the school personnel and the students and families.

Five of the 10 schools had Title VII funds, including one in California, that had received an Academic Excellence Dissemination grant in 1994 to 1996.

School Organization

Schools generally organized themselves by grade level teams with both vertical and horizontal alignment and accountability evident. Faculty met frequently, some as often as three times a week. There was support by the administration for these regularly scheduled meetings, with the principals often planning the agendas, in most cases with input from the teachers and staff. Six out of the 10 schools included elective staff in their meetings, allowing for easier integration and alignment. Most of the time at the meetings was spent on curriculum and instruction with staff using student data to inform curriculum and instruction decisions. Teachers were also provided regular planning time.

School Indicators

The 10 schools participating in this study had similar profiles, including:

- High poverty
  Ten schools had at least half of their students eligible for free or reduced-lunch program, a poverty indicator.

- High average attendance
  All of the schools had high attendance (86 to 98 percent) .

- High percentage of their students participating in the bilingual education programs
  Most of the schools had at least a third of their enrolled students being served by bilingual education programs – one school served ***all (100 percent)*** *of their 219 enrolled students.*

- Low retention rate
  Most of the schools had low retention rates – four schools retained 1 percent or less.

- Low annual dropout rate
  Nine of the 10 schools had a 0 percent annual dropout rate.

- Low percentage of migrant students
  More than half of the schools did not serve migrant students. Of the five that did, three served less than 10 percent. However, in one school, two out of five students were migrant.

- LEP student representation in gifted and talented programs
  Most of the schools with gifted and talented (GT) or advanced placement (AP) programs had LEP students fully participating.

- Low LEP student representation in special education program
  Most of the schools had few LEP students in their special education programs.

Student Outcome Indicators

All of the 10 selected sites reflected significant progress (statistically and educationally) for the students served by their bilingual education programs during the program year (1997-98). While, in some cases, there was a notable gap in the achievement of students served by the program and the regular students, especially when they were compared to the state's standards, the majority of students reflected a narrowing of the achievement gap over time. In fact, in many cases, the improvement rates for the students served in the program sites exceeded the rates of improvement for the comparison groups included in the reports. In a few instances, the growth rates were extraordinary – reflecting accelerated improvement rates over relatively short time frames.

In one school year, one school showed a pre- post-test improvement for their students in the bilingual education program that exceeded all expected gains.

Common Achievement Level Findings

In analyzing student achievement data, there are significant observations that are common to all of the programs: (a) all of the programs collected and analyzed one or more types of student achievement data, using multiple measures; (b) all of the programs had procedures for assessing all of their students and for compiling, organizing, and analyzing their student data; and (c) all of the programs also engaged in some tabulation and analysis of the data. Some had external support from external evaluators; others involved teachers in the collection and the analysis of the data – used to help school teams craft improvement plans.

Also observed were the use of multiple measures, which were culturally and contextually appropriate for the students. In addition to the yearly progress measures, there were also ongoing or interim measures that were used as benchmarks and indicators of progress throughout the year. Programs used data to inform and drive their curricular and instructional practices, with administrators and teachers accepting accountability for the academic performance of their students.

School Level Indicators

Leadership

> *"One school has drawn on the research of prominent investigators in designing and evaluating its program. Before starting the program four years ago, the principal and staff read the literature and visited schools with exemplary practices in the state and around the country. It then decided to implement a late-exit model. Last year, they asked a prominent researcher to bring a team to the school to assess the program and provide the staff with suggestions for improvement."*
>
> **– IDRA Researcher**

Observations: IDRA's on-site observations showed that all of the schools had strong and visible leadership. While the principals varied in their leadership styles, all had some common traits:

- ❒ total and unwavering commitment to their students' achievement and to an excellent bilingual education program that was fully integrated into the school;

- ❒ open and frequent communication between the principal, faculty and staff;
- ❒ pro-active involvement of faculty, staff and the community in the bilingual program;
- ❒ professionalism, skills, and knowledge;
- ❒ well-informed on the rationale for bilingual education;
- ❒ valuing of all individuals – students, faculty and staff;
- ❒ an ability to inspire, motivate and validate;
- ❒ openness to innovation and change;
- ❒ access provided to current research and best practices;
- ❒ an ability to identify, secure, and mobilize resources; and
- ❒ support for faculty and staff.

Survey: School surveys (N=36) showed that teachers and administrators believed that the schools' administration supported teacher autonomy. Also important was the involvement of ESL and bilingual education teachers in the schools' decision-making process as well as their autonomy in the decisions they made in their classrooms.

Vision and Goals

> *"One school is described by its principal as a school of excellence. 'Our purpose is to empower our students through a strong instructional program in which it will enable us to prepare them to meet the demands of the 21st century.' Their curricular and instructional practices are designed so that students maintain their culture while learning English. All of the school's resources are dedicated to supporting them in this goal."*
>
> **– IDRA Researcher**

Observations: All of the schools had visions and goals that were published and evident throughout the schools, setting clear expectations for the achievement of all students. Furthermore, these visions and goals manifested themselves in the day-to-day work of the principals, faculty, staff, parents and families. In some cases, the visions and goals were developed by the principals, faculty, staff and parents, adding a dimension of ownership and buy-in.

Surveys: Surveys showed that the schools had visions that embraced the goals of bilingual education with a mission inclusive of all students and their families.

School Climate

> *"Every classroom at this school is clear, well-lit and conducive to learning. The students take pride in their school and maintain it well. Student work is displayed throughout the classrooms, as is literature about the topic currently being discussed. There is an abundance of printed material on the walls, but it does not create a distraction. Everything on the walls is needed during the lessons. Student work is also highly visible in hallways and common areas."*
>
> **– IDRA Researcher**

Observations: While school locations varied greatly – from inner-city urban to rural and isolated – the intrinsic character and climate of the schools shared some common traits:

All of the schools were safe and orderly;

- All of the administration, faculty, staff, parents and students felt responsible for maintaining a safe and orderly climate;
- "Order" operationally looked different in the different settings: "orderly chaos" in some, structured and well-defined in others; but the underlying "order" of well-defined expectations, responsibilities and roles were clear and understood by all;
- "Safe" included personal safety as well as safety to innovate, change and communicate;
- All of the schools affirmed and valued racial and cultural differences; and
- All of the schools had a climate of caring, belonging and friendliness.

Surveys: Teachers and administrators reported a positive school climate that nurtured and maintained cultural diversity and mutual respect.

Linkages

> *"This school's high expectations of excellence for all learners includes teachers and staff as well as students. The principals, teachers, aides and staff work collaboratively, through continuously planning and re-evaluating the school's program and each student's progress to ensure that no student is left behind.*
>
> *Teachers meet weekly in teams by grade level. The Title I reading teacher is included in these meetings, and there is ongoing work on projects where data is collected and analyzed, and changes or affirmations are made. Depending on need, these meetings can be held twice or three times per week. District improvement plans are discussed, and teachers often seek as well as share strategies to help meet goals. This school has a very committed staff: they come early, stay late, and it is not surprising to find many teachers at the school on weekends."*
>
> **– IDRA Researcher**

Observations: The central office staff provided strong leadership and respect for the bilingual program. There were clearly articulated roles and responsibilities among central office staff as well as frequent and open communication between central office and school staff. All of the schools reported strong support from someone in central office for their program and their school.

In addition to the vertical linkages, there was evidence of horizontal linkages as well, with teachers working in teams, sharing, exchanging, communicating and focusing on achievement of all students. Bilingual teachers were never isolated from the rest of the faculty. They, along with the bilingual program, were fully integrated into the rhythm and essence of the school.

Surveys: Teachers and administrators reported a high degree of collaborative work between faculty and staff.

School Organization and Accountability

> *"The bilingual program is an integral part of the school. All of the teachers are expected to speak Spanish fluently. The IDRA researchers reported that "Proud to be Bilingual" should be the key phrase to describe this school. Everyone there, from the teachers to the parents, recognize that bilingualism is a valuable asset. They are very proud of their stance on bilingual education, despite the state's controversial Proposition 227. The teachers have courageously defended good teaching practices despite opposition from the state, many community members and even their own teacher union."*
>
> **– IDRA Researcher**

Observations: The bilingual program was an integral part of the school and its academic plan. It was also evident that faculty and staff held themselves accountable for the success of all students, including LEP students.

Survey: Surveys showed that teachers and administrators saw bilingual education as an integral part of their schools.

Professional Development

> *"Most teachers have been in this school for a number of years. Rather than recruit new teachers, the current staff is prepared through professional development and certification initiatives of the district. There are three designated ESL teachers and one designated bilingual teacher. There is also a plan in place to have Heritage Language (HL) teachers bilingually endorsed.*
>
> *Both the district and the Title VII project have developed an action plan for teacher training and certification. Priorities for this training include literacy, bilingual endorsements for all HL teachers and teacher certification for all aides with HL skills. The Title VII program is involved in a cooperative effort with the Navajo language program at a nearby college to deliver a comprehensive professional development package for the Navajo language, literacy and culture teachers. Costs are paid by the project and the district. Additionally, the campus houses distance-learning facilities and a remote facility for a state university, where courses and other educational activities are provided for teachers and other professionals.*
>
> *Inside the school, the principal and teachers learn from each other through a program that requires them to do demonstration teaching before their colleagues. The school also has its bilingual program expectations clearly spelled out in the language development plan."*
>
> **– IDRA Researcher**

Observations: Bilingual teachers were fully credentialed and continuously acquiring new knowledge regarding best practices in bilingual education. All teachers in the schools received information about bilingual education. Teachers took a pro-active interest in keeping up on best practices and sharing their lessons learned with others. One non-bilingual education teacher who did not speak Spanish, began taking evening classes to learn Spanish on his own time and at his own cost, so that he could communicate with Spanish-speaking students. Ultimately, teachers were committed to learning and sharing for the sake of their students. Professional development was perceived as a means to that end.

Surveys: Teachers and administrators reported substantive, appropriate and inclusive professional development with all teachers providing input into professional development.

Parent Involvement

> *"This integration of community culture and school lifestyle makes an enormous impression on the parents and stimulates them to contribute to their children's school and become involved in their children's success.*
>
> *Vital to this school's success is the high level of involvement of parents, many of them leading migrant lifestyles. Both Russian and Hispanic parents state that volunteering is second in importance only to the teachers' involvement in assuring the success of the bilingual program."*
>
> **– IDRA Researcher**

Observations: Parents were strong advocates of the bilingual programs and were welcome in their children's schools, not as "helpers" but as partners engaged in meaningful activities within the school structure. Parents' experiences were validated and honored in the classrooms, irrespective of their social or economic backgrounds. Some businesses facilitated parent involvement, with flextime for work so that parents could participate in school activities during the day. Parents felt they belonged at their children's school and were very positive about the administration, faculty and staff, saying they believed them to be truly concerned for and committed to their children's success.

Surveys: Respondents reported actively encouraging parents to participate in all activities in meaningful ways. They also reported that all parents were knowledgeable and supported the bilingual education program, citing mutual respect and validation toward cultural diversity.

Staff Accountability and Student Assessment

> *"All teachers and staff are involved in action research. This shows a commitment to the premise that student learning is the job of everyone at the school and keeps each member of the teaching and support staff accountable to the school's goals. Everyone looks to each other for assistance in areas where improvement is needed.*
>
> *Each grade has guidelines based on state criteria, and the school has developed its own benchmarks that align with the state's. Standardized testing, state tests and open-ended assessments are used to measure compliance.*
>
> *Data is shared at staff meetings and specific sessions are scheduled for data analysis. There is ongoing assessment and intervention to assure that all students reach end-of-year benchmarks. Yearly plans for each grade level are built on those results and continuously updated, and checklists and quarterly assessments are shared with parents. Data analysis is also presented at staff meetings and district planning meetings."*
>
> **– IDRA Researcher**

Observations: The schools used multiple assessment measures, including measures in the students' native language. Rigorous academic standards applied to all students, including LEP students. Administrators and faculty actively sought appropriate assessment measures and set clear and rigorous standards and achievement levels, sometimes engaging the expertise and support from researchers in the bilingual education field. Teachers felt accountable for all of the students, knew each one individually and adapted their instructional strategies according to the needs and strengths of each. Student assessment was ongoing and used for diagnostic purposes.

Survey: Respondents confirmed assessment in multiple languages and the disaggregation of data by student group and program. They also reported frequent discussions between the principal and the faculty on student achievement.

Staff Selection and Recognition

> *"The teacher of this class is specially trained in diversity and very knowledgeable in the areas of history and geography. Because she immediately captures the students' attention, everyone looks forward to the class. There is also a hands-on component that usually takes the form of a writing assignment.*
>
> *Teachers are all very well prepared with their lessons. All teachers are certified to teach LEP students in order to teach in the school and all are multilingual. Teachers seek out professional development, with some being provided by the district and school."*
>
> **– IDRA Researcher**

Observations: Staff were selected based on their academic background, experience in bilingual education and language proficiency. They were also selected for their enthusiasm, commitment and openness to change and innovation. Teachers were strongly supported, often recognized for their students' successes and were part of a team that was characterized as loyal and committed. Many of the staff stayed in their schools. One group followed their principal from one school to another, implementing a successful program in both.

Surveys: Teachers and administrators reported positive reinforcement of their students' academic progress.

Community Involvement

> *"This high school is within the Navajo Reservation. Although it is on the reservation, it is a public junior and senior high school serving students from the surrounding communities. The school opened in 1983, nine years after a community group organized to assist the school board in planning the school. Before this, students either attended boarding schools, lived with friends and family in other communities to attend school, or rode the bus to a high school, approximately 80 miles from the area. Having a school in the community finally allowed Navajo children to attend school and participate in school activities and still be home with their families in the evenings. It also permitted parents to become involved in their children's education."*
>
> **– IDRA Researcher**

Observations: The communities were well aware of the bilingual education programs and were strong advocates of the programs. Community members formed strong linkages with the schools, sharing staff, and building resources and expertise. One notable exception was the California school, which was struggling to survive in the context of Proposition 227. There, the community was divided, and the school isolated, left to survive despite the political context. These dynamics appeared to have resulted in a united stand among the administration, faculty, and staff and have mobilized many to actively fight for their students' rights to an excellent and equitable education.

Surveys: Teachers and administrators reported active and positive engagement of parents and community members, many in long-term and intensive partnerships. This resulted in shared responsibility and ownership for student success.

Classroom Level Indicators: Programmatic and Instructional Practices

Classroom Climate

> *"Inside the classrooms, posters and student work graced the walls. Most of these used both English and another language. There were also a large number of books in every classroom, both in the native language and English. In one class, more than 40 books had been translated from English to Russian by a group of involved parents.*
>
> *Most classrooms had listening centers, a reading corner and a computer station. Student desks were arranged in groups of four or five, and the teacher moved among the groups. Moreover, teachers interacted with each other frequently regarding instructional topics and methods. One teacher cited the sharing of ideas and thoughts among the staff as being the most important professional development activity. 'Curriculum planning and mapping here at the school helps us to see that we are all going in the same direction,' she said."*
>
> **– IDRA Researcher**

Observations: The classrooms strongly reflected the school climate – different styles but common intrinsic characteristics, such as high expectations for all students, recognition and honoring of cultural and linguistic differences, students as active participants in their own education, parents and community members actively involved in the classrooms through tutoring, sharing experiences, reading, planning activities, etc., and heterogeneous grouping.

Surveys: Respondents reported highly interactive and engaging classroom climates with a high percentage of time on task and consistent, positive student behavior.

Program Model

> *"The design of the bilingual program specifies the amount of time devoted to each of the three components: an ESL component called English language development, instruction in the native language and sheltered English techniques. Initial reading instruction is provided in the native language, with English literacy usually introduced in the third grade. The content areas are provided initially in the native language with a carefully planned introduction into each grade of specified subjects using sheltered English techniques.*
>
> *From the beginning of the program at the kindergarten level, students spend a portion of each day with English speakers. Russian and Spanish speakers are also grouped together for English language development. The staff reported that this accelerates English acquisition because both kinds of students were forced to use English to communicate with each other. Students remain in the program through at least the fifth grade."*
>
> **– IDRA Researcher**

Observations: All of the program models – transitional, late exit, dual language – were grounded in sound theory and best practices associated with an enriched, not remedial, instructional model and were consistent with the characteristics of the LEP student population.

Surveys: Administrators and teachers believe in the program and consistently articulated on its viability and success.

Curriculum and Instruction

> *"IDRA researchers noted that all the instruction was uniformly of high quality and reflected best practices recommended for mainstream and second language-learners. Students often worked in cooperative, heterogeneous groups or with partners. Student-to-student and teacher-to-student interactions were frequent, meaningful and focused on instructional tasks. Activities were hands-on, and teachers used a large variety of materials: bilingual books of many genres and types as well as visual, audiovisual and art materials. Many students were observed receiving individual or small group assistance from additional teachers, bilingual educational assistants and parents. This extra help was provided inside their classrooms or in quiet, cozy corners in the halls outside."*
>
> **– IDRA Researcher**

"Writing assignments tend to reflect the cultural background of the students and always begin with a class-wide discussion of the topic. Sometimes, the teacher assigns students to write a group story. For example, one class was prompted, 'Te he premiado $2,500. ¿como vas a compartir este dinero?' (You have been awarded $2,500. How are you going to divide up this money?). One student began discussing how his uncle had won some money, and that if this had happened to the student, he would give the money to certain groups of people. Other students joined in the discussion, and after 10 to 15 minutes, the teacher asked them to come to a consensus. The students decided that they would help out their family, their church and the poor children of Mexico. The teacher then proceeded to model the writing process, and as a whole the class wrote a group story.

Again an researcher commented, 'It's discussion like this that leads me to believe that the English-learning students are being served, not only academically but also culturally. Every lesson I observed touched on the everyday life of the children'."

– IDRA Researcher

Observations: The curricula were planned to reflect the students' cultures. All of the instruction observed in the classrooms was meaningful, academically challenging, and linguistically and culturally relevant. Teachers used a variety of strategies and techniques that responded to different learning styles, including technology.

Surveys: Teachers and administrators reported the bilingual program was designed to meet the students' needs with alignment between the curriculum standards, assessments and professional development. Teachers were actively involved in curriculum planning and meet regularly, with administrative support, to plan.

Teacher Expectations

"This high school is clearly a multicultural school that honors all of the students' cultures and languages. There is an impressive array of content area classes available in most of the students' languages. All teachers are truly committed to preparing the students for high performance. This school has established a culture similar to a college preparatory school. Students are very aware that as they learn English, they need to follow certain academic paths that will lead them to college.

The school is innovative in the way it is able to deal with a multitude of languages and cultures and preparing students to transition into a new country and a new language. This school values differences and acknowledges potential in every student. There is no such thing as a 'problem student'."

– IDRA Researcher

Observations: Teachers expected all students to succeed and were willing to do whatever it took to reach this goal. They valued diversity and drew on its strengths, creating an environment in the classroom and the school that was accepting, valuing and inclusive.

Surveys: Teachers and administrators reported a high commitment to their students' educational success and cited this as a critical factor in academic achievement.

Program Articulation

> *"Teachers learn from each other through their weekly team planning and team teaching in inclusion models. Teaming develops the curriculum for teaching English-learning students important academic skills. As an example, regular teachers work closely with the ESL teacher to pick out content area vocabulary, which is then studied in classrooms. The vocabulary is presented in both English and Spanish, and a concerted effort is made in all subjects to use the vocabulary words. Such support in planning and instruction ensures English-learners' skill and knowledge development.*
>
> *Much of the uniformity in class structure and continuity of lesson plans is the result of collaborative planning. Teacher conference and planning periods are scheduled at the same time each day by grade level. This allows time for development and sharing of ideas on how to use curriculum and materials to augment effectiveness. Test results are also reviewed at this time, as teachers are held accountable for student learning in six-week assessments. To maximize test scores, teachers provide after-school and Saturday tutoring sessions, and if they see that a student is experiencing academic difficulties, they provide one-on-one tutoring sessions for that student."*
>
> **– IDRA Researcher**

Observations: There were common programs of instruction across grade levels that had been aligned with developmentally appropriate practices and student language proficiency levels in English and the students' native language. This was accomplished in many schools through coordination and communication and through strong linkages across all levels (grades, principal and faculty, school and central office).

Surveys: Teachers met frequently to plan collaboratively. This open and frequent communication, coupled with alignment across the curriculum and assessment resulted in a seamless, well-articulated curricular and instructional plan.

Criteria to Identify Promising/Exemplary Practices in Bilingual Education

These major findings yielded the following 25 criteria or indicators of success that may be used by researchers and practitioners to identify promising or exemplary practices in bilingual education.

School Indicators

Retention Rate

- Ninety-eight percent or more of all students, including LEP students, are not retained in grade; retention is only allowed for extenuating circumstances.

Dropout Rate

- High School: Ninety-five percent or more (longitudinal rate) of all students, including LEP students, graduate with a high school diploma.

- Elementary School: Ninety-eight percent or more of all students complete the elementary school curriculum.

Enrollment in Gifted and Talented and in Advanced Placement (GT/AP) Programs

- LEP students, as compared to non-LEP students, are not under-represented in GT/AP programs.

Enrollment in Special Education or Remedial Programs

- LEP students, as compared to non-LEP students, are not over-represented in special education or remedial programs.

Test Exemption Rates

- No students, other than special education students exempted by their Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committees, are exempted from tests.

Program Exiting Standard

- Students in bilingual education programs are not exited before the third grade but are exited only upon demonstrating full English proficiency and being on grade level in all content areas.

Student Outcomes

Oral Language Proficiency

- Students participating in bilingual education programs since kindergarten are fully proficient in speaking English and their native language (on level) by the fifth grade; secondary level students fully proficient in their native language in ESL programs are fully proficient in speaking English after three years in the program. This is not an exit criteria.

Written Language Proficiency

- Students participating in bilingual education programs since kindergarten are fully proficient in reading and writing English and in their native language (on level) by the fifth grade; secondary level students fully proficient in their native language in ESL programs are fully proficient in reading and writing English after three years in the program. This is not an exit criteria.

Content Area Mastery in English

- LEP students' performance in content areas (language arts, mathematics, science, social studies) meet and exceed the state and/or district standards.

Content Area Mastery in Native Language

- LEP students' performance in content areas (language arts, mathematics, science, social studies) meet and exceed the state and/or district standards.

At the School Level: Leadership

Leadership

- Program leaders are well-informed of the rationale for bilingual education and share an active commitment to bilingualism. They pro-actively involve teachers, the community and private sector in the design and development of the bilingual program and are open to innovation.

Vision and Goals

- The school has published statements of expectations to the school community that create a vision and set of goals that define the achievement levels of all students, including LEP students. Staff, parents and students, including language-minority parents and students, can state the purpose of the school in their own words.

School Climate

- The school climate is safe and orderly. A safe and orderly climate is a shared goal that is articulated by educators, students and community members as a whole. Everyone feels responsible for maintaining a safe and orderly school climate for all students.

Linkages

- Clearly articulated roles and responsibilities, dynamic two-way communication, and focused and sustained supports between central office and school level staff provide strong leadership, credibility and respect for the bilingual program.

School Organization and Accountability

- The bilingual program is an integral part of the school's academic plan and is widely respected by the school's administration. There is strong accountability for the success of all students, including LEP students.

At the School Level: Support

Professional Development

- Fully credentialed bilingual and ESL teachers are continuously acquiring new knowledge regarding best practices in bilingual education and ESL and other best practices in curriculum and instruction and receive appropriate training in the students' native language. All teachers in the school regularly receive information about bilingual education, ESL strategies, and students' cultural and linguistic characteristics that serve as assets to their academic success.

Parent Involvement

- All parents, including parents of students in bilingual and ESL programs, know the rationale and the critical components of bilingual and ESL programs and are strong advocates of the programs.

Staff Accountability and Student Assessment

- Staff hold themselves accountable for the academic success of all students, including LEP students. The school uses appropriate multiple assessment measures to describe academic success for all students, including LEP students. Rigorous academic standards apply to *all* students, including LEP students. Assessment measures include measures in the students' native languages. All measures are aligned with the approved curriculum and related standards.

Staff Selection and Recognition

- Staff selection and development includes screening to ensure full written and oral proficiency in both languages and training for teachers to adjust the program to ensure that all teachers are able to serve LEP students. Teachers feel strongly supported and free to innovate. Teachers are frequently recognized for their successes.

Community Involvement

- Community members know the rationale and the critical components of bilingual and ESL programs and are strong advocates of the program.

At the Classroom Level: Programmatic and Instructional Practices

Program Model

- Teachers and community members participated in the selection and design of a bilingual/ESL program model that is consistent with the characteristics of the LEP student population. The program model is grounded in sound theory and best practices associated with an enriched, not remedial, instructional model. Administrators and teachers believe in the program, are well versed on the program, are able to articulate and comment on its viability and success, and demonstrate their belief.

Classroom Climate

- The classroom environment communicates high expectations for *all* students, including LEP students. Teachers seek ways to value cultural and linguistic differences and fully integrate them into the curriculum.

Curriculum and Instruction

- The curriculum reflects and values the students' culture. The curriculum adheres to high standards. Instruction is meaningful, technologically appropriate, academically challenging, and linguistically and culturally relevant. It is innovative and uses a variety of techniques that responds to different learning styles.

Teacher Expectations

- Teachers expect all students, including LEP students, to achieve at high standards and are willing to do whatever it takes to reach this goal. They value diversity and know how to create an environment that is accepting and inclusive.

Program Articulation

- There is strong evidence of a common program of instruction that is properly scoped, sequenced and articulated across grade levels and has been aligned with developmentally appropriate practices and student language proficiency levels in English and the students' first language.

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